



May 31, 2001

Civil Rights and Human Dignity

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The Honorable Greg Ganske
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Dingell
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Ganske and Dingell:

On behalf of the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, I am pleased to express our endorsement of H.R. 526, the "Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001." We firmly believe that this patient right's legislation offers the strongest consumer protections, including an essential legally enforceable remedy against health plans for injury caused by withholding and limiting needed care.

As the leading national legal-advocacy organization representing people with mental disabilities, we are highly supportive of a consumer's right to access speciality care in a timely manner, including mental health specialists. We also support providing access to prescription medications that are medically necessary for patient care. The Center applauds your bill because it includes these and many other important protections and it truly recognizes the importance of guaranteeing these rights.

Once again, we commend you for your leadership on this important issue and look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to ensure comprehensive patient protections for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Laurel L. Stine, J.D.
Director of Federal Relations

